

Amendments to the Specification:

This listing of the paragraphs of the specification will replace all prior versions of the corresponding paragraphs of the specification in the application.

Listing of Amended Paragraphs of the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 18, line 14 to read as follows:

Furthermore, a nitridosilicate-based compound produced by the production method of the present invention, above all, a highly nitrided nitridosilicate-based compound, i.e., a nitridosilicate-based compound in which the number of oxygen atoms is smaller than the number of atoms of alkaline-earth metal per mol of nitridosilicate-based compound or a ~~highly~~ nitrided nitridosilicate-based compound in which the number of oxygen atoms is smaller than the number obtained by multiplying the number of atoms of rare earth metal by 1.5 per mol of nitridosilicate-based compound, in particular, a nitridosilicate-based compound containing substantially no oxygen component is produced while a firing material is being reduced actively due to the reaction with carbon to be a reducing agent and an oxygen component in the firing material is removed as carbon oxide or carbon dioxide. Therefore, the above-mentioned nitridosilicate-based compound has a small mixed amount of impurity oxygen and high purity, and consequently, exhibits high performance.